an automatic conveyor for moving the reagent container relative to the plunger, wherein the conveyor is movable in a first direction to place the plunger in a position to open the stopper, and wherein the conveyor is movable in a second direction, opposite to the first direction, to place the plunger in a position to close the stopper; and

structure for translating movement of a pipetting-needle carrier to the plunger to cause movement of the plunger.

8. (Amended) The appliance of claim 7, wherein the structure for translating movement includes means for moving the plunger in a downward direction in response to movement of the pipetting-needle carrier in an upward direction.

9. (Amended) The appliance of claim 8, wherein the structure for translating movement includes two rocker arms and a stop rod, the stop rod being connected to and positioned between the two rocker arms, the stop rod also being connected to the pipetting-needle carrier, such that the stop rod moves with the pipetting-needle carrier.

10. (Amended) The appliance of claim 8, further comprising a traction drive for moving the pipetting-needle carrier.

11. (Amended) The appliance of claim 7, wherein the structure for translating movement includes a thrust plate and a catch member, wherein the thrust plate is engagable with the plunger, and wherein the catch member is connected to a means for driving the pipetting-needle carrier, such that movement of the pipetting-needle carrier in a first direction results in movement of the catch member and thrust plate in a second direction opposite the first direction.

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